COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
CONSEIL DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

December 2007

This newsletter provides quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of COU. This issue covers the period of fall 2007.

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## COU presents prestigious award to York dean

Paul Axelrod, York University's Dean of Education, was presented with the David C. Smith Award for Significant Contribution to Scholarship and Policy on Higher Education in Canada on November 1. A distinguished scholar and noted author, Dr. Axelrod brought to bear the heart of his scholarship – the history and policy issues of schooling and higher education in Canada – on important debates about education and, as a result, has made significant contributions to the development of educational policy in Canada.

Members of Council, special guests and a large number of senior representatives from government, primarily from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), attended the dinner. Council members were especially pleased that the recently appointed MTCU Minister John Milloy and Parliamentary Assistant Reza Moridi, along with Deputy Minister Philip Steenkamp, were able to participate in the event.

The award was established to celebrate the distinguished contributions that the late David C. Smith made to scholarship and policy in higher education. Rev. Mary Smith (Dr. Smith's widow) was on hand to present the 2007 award to Dr. Axelrod who, in keeping with tradition, delivered a lecture on the award's theme: *A History of Good Teaching: Student Perspectives,* which will be posted in December on COU's website (www.cou.on.ca).

Dr. Axelrod, as the sixth recipient of the award, joins an illustrious group of winners: the Honourable Bob Rae, Bernard Shapiro, James Downey, Rob Prichard and David Cameron.

## Two new Executive Heads join Council

**MAMDOUH SHOUKRI** became York University's President and Vice-Chancellor on July 1, 2007. Previously Dr. Shoukri had served as Vice-President, Research and International Affairs, at McMaster University, where he was responsible for all research activities and the pursuit of new partnerships – including technology transfer and economic development opportunities – to capitalize on McMaster's research strengths. He joined McMaster's faculty in 1984 and was made Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Chair of the Mechanical Engineering Department and finally Dean of the Faculty of Engineering. Dr. Shoukri also worked in the Research Division of Ontario Hydro (1977-84).

Dr. Shoukri is a member of the Ontario Research and Innovation Council (a council appointed by the Premier in 2006) and the Board of Directors of the Ontario Centres of Excellence Inc. He is also a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering and the Canadian Society of Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Shoukri's professional memberships include the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario, the Canadian Nuclear Society and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

An author and co-author of more than a 100 papers in refereed journals and symposia, Dr. Shoukri holds a BSc (Hons) in mechanical engineering from Cairo University (1970) and a MEng (1974) and PhD in mechanical engineering (1977) from McMaster University.

## *eINFO* goes live!

The Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) launched a new and improved *eINFO* website (www.electronicinfo.ca) – a comprehensive guide to Ontario universities for secondary school students.

Using feedback from students, universities and guidance officials, OUAC retooled and expanded its online resource so that users have access to more information to research their program and university choices:

- Find programs, prerequisites and grade requirements using the "Degree Locator."
- Browse scholarships and awards in the "Further Information" section.
- Search for residence and meal plan information, also in the "Further Information" section.
- Consult "Map of Ontario" for university locations and campuses.

Students can browse the site anonymously, or they can set up an *eINFO* account to save their research/selections for return visits and build, if they wish, a customized chart to make comparisons. They can also access the CUDO website (see story that follows) on COU's home page (www.cou.on.ca) to supplement their research.

For more information about the *eINFO* website, contact OUAC at einfo@ouac.on.ca.

**MAX BLOUW** joined Wilfrid Laurier University as President and Vice-Chancellor on September 1, 2007. Previously, Dr. Blouw had served as Vice-President of Research at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), where he developed significant university initiatives. He joined UNBC in 1995 as Professor of Biology and, two years later, joined the university's administration as Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies. Dr. Blouw's career began as a biologist in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Winnipeg, and from there he went on to teach biology at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, and zoology at the University of British Columbia before joining UNBC.

Dr. Blouw has had a long-standing involvement with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), acting as a member of the Executive Committee and as Co-Chair of its Committee on Grants and Scholarships. He was recently reappointed to a second term as Chair of the University Advisory Group to Industry Canada. Dr. Blouw received the 2005 Science and Technology Champion Award from the BC Innovation Council in recognition of his leadership.

He earned his BSc and MSc in zoology from the University of Manitoba (1972 and 1977, respectively) and his PhD in biology from the University of New Brunswick (1982).

## Ontario and national academic vice-presidents meet to discuss key issues

The Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) held its annual fall meeting from October 9 to 10, and on the heels of this provincial meeting followed the annual conference of the National Association of Vice-Presidents, Academic. Agenda items ranged from quality assurance and data management, to internationalization and enrolment trends in Canada. Both events were hosted by the University of Guelph.

At the national conference, U of G President Alastair Summerlee delivered a keynote presentation entitled *Change or Perish: When it comes to quality, are universities the dinosaurs of the 21st century?* There was also a panel discussion involving Dr. Summerlee and Laurentian University President Judith Woodsworth and Dalhousie University President Tom Traves, who discussed the challenges of transitioning from provost to president. Other guest speakers included Ken Norrie, Vice-President (Research), Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario; Claire Morris, President, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC); and Herb O'Heron, Senior Advisor, AUCC.

## Ontario universities' COFO-UO reports go online

Ontario's 46 universities and affiliated and federated institutions now use the web to enter their data into the COFO-UO (Council of Finance Officers-Universities of Ontario) *Financial Report of Ontario Universities*, thanks to COU's successful completion of a two-year IT project. The new online system checks for errors and inconsistencies, and enforces greater consistency with COFO-UO data from year-to-year and between institutions than formerly possible.

If researchers, media or the public need to see how data have changed over time, they can access this information – institutional data from 2000-01 to 2005-06 – using a Beyond 20/20 product that permits easy comparison and analysis. This electronic report, entitled *COFO-UO Report from 2000-01 to 2005-06*, can be accessed directly at http://data.cou.ca/WDS or via COU's website (www.cou.on.ca) under All Publications. For more information, contact Richard Smith (rsmith@cou.on.ca).

## Re-launch of CUDO!

CUDO (Common University Data Ontario) was recently re-launched. CUDO is an important online tool that allows students, parents and the public to access – and, if they wish, compare – information on all of Ontario's universities and the Ontario College of Art & Design compiled and presented in a consistent format.

With CUDO, users can assess one, two or all of Ontario's universities using the following key benchmarks:

- Number of degrees awarded, student enrolment and entering averages – all by program;
- Number of students living on campus and activities offered;
- Student satisfaction;
- First-year tuition and ancillary fees by program;
- Number of teaching faculty;
- Undergraduate class size by year level;
- Research awards granted; and
- Graduation rates and employment rates by program.

CUDO users can also access enrolment by gender, immigration status, and results from the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey.

To access CUDO, visit COU's website (www.cou.on.ca).

# COU presents brief to Ontario's Expert Commission on Pensions

On October 18, 2007, the *COU Brief to the Ontario Expert Commission on Pensions* was presented to the Commission by Peter George, Chair of Council and President of McMaster University, Jim Butler, Vice-President, Finance and Administration at Wilfrid Laurier University, and Betsy Springer, Director of Pension Fund Management at Carleton University. Between now and 2008, the Commission is conducting a review of the *Pension Benefits Act*. The legislation, which governs pensions throughout the province, has not been substantially revised in 20 years. The Commission is expected to present its report to government by summer 2008.

The COU submission focused on the changes to the legislation that Ontario universities believe are necessary to provide a sustainable environment for university pension plans. For a copy of the COU brief, see Publications on COU's website (www.cou.on.ca).

# OCUR: advancing university research in Ontario

**REPRESENTATIVES FROM GOVERNMENT AND RESEARCH-GRANTING AGENCIES ATTEND OCUR MEETING:** On October 18, the Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR) held its first general meeting in Ottawa for the 2007-08 term that was attended by a number of invited guests, including:

- Arthur Kroeger, Chair, and Peter Monette, Secretariat to the Experts Committee for Human Research Participant Protection in Canada (as well as Secretariat to the Sponsors' Table to which the Experts Committee reports);
- Eliot Phillipson, President, Canada Foundation for Innovation;
- Wendy Watson-Wright, ADM Science, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
- Robert Walker, ADM Science and Technology, Department of National Defence, and Chief Executive Officer, Defence R&D Canada;
- Feyrouz Kurji, Director, Higher-Education R&D Policy Directorate, Industry Canada;
- Suzanne Fortier, President, and Nigel Lloyd, Executive Vice-President, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council;
- Michelle Gauthier, Director, Research and Policy Analysis, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada; and
- Christian Sylvain, Director, Policy, Planning and International Affairs, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

The evening before the meeting, OCUR members also met with SSHRC President Chad Gaffield and Executive Vice-President Carmen Charette.

**OCUR RESPONDS TO FEDERAL SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY:** Following the federal government's release of its S&T strategy for Canada, OCUR forwarded a response to the Prime Minister and senior members of government, offering suggestions to help ensure that the strategy's implementation attracts the greatest possible support from stakeholders within the research community in Ontario and across Canada.

**GRADUATE ISSUES DRIVE JOINT MEETING WITH OCGS AND OCAV CHAIR:** Members of OCUR and the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) and Sheila Embleton, Chair of the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), met at York University on November 22 to discuss mutual goals and issues around graduate studies. Topics included creating more opportunities for graduate student international exchange; preparing for graduate enrolment growth; aligning research and teaching objectives by developing interdisciplinary graduate programs; and the need for Ontario-grown programs to support recruitment of top scholars.

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## Office of Health Sciences co-hosts forum on clinical education placements

On September 17, Colleges Ontario, the Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences and COU's Office of Health Sciences, with the support of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, hosted a forum on "A Co-ordinated Provincial System for Clinical Education Placements." The purpose of the forum was to identify the level of support for a co-ordinated, electronic provincial system that could streamline and improve the placement of health science students in the clinical environment. Experts identified a range of options for the structure of a co-ordinated system, including a network of systems that share common standards. A Steering Committee has since been struck to develop steps for moving this initiative forward.

## Three new members join COU Secretariat's senior management team

**JENNIFER GRASS** assumed the role of Senior Director, Communications and Public Affairs, in October 2007. Jennifer brings to COU a vast experience in communications and public affairs advising corporate and non-profit leaders as a consultant and principal of several consulting firms. She also has a strong appreciation for research, having participated in the design of her former firm's online research capacity.

An award-winning journalist, Jennifer worked for the *Toronto Star*, *Financial Times* and *Financial Post*, before embarking on a consulting career that has encompassed media relations, marketing communications, stakeholder relations and issues management. She was also Editor of the Queen's *Journal*.

**SHARON BERMAN** took office as COU's new Executive Director, Corporate Services, in November 2007. She has more than 15 years of government experience in progressively responsible positions, with expertise in financial and human resource management, policy and program development, information technology project planning, operations, contract/procurement management and grant administration.

Prior to joining COU, Sharon worked for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, where she was Associate Director in the Drug Programs Branch. She also worked for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, concluding her time there as Finance Manager in the Universities Branch. Sharon holds a BA (Hons) in business administration from Wilfrid Laurier University and an MBA from the University of Toronto.

**ROBBIN TOURANGEAU** assumed the newly created position of Senior Director, Special Projects, in December 2007. Robin will oversee a number of special projects, including COU's advocacy efforts at the federal level, collaboration on public service renewal with both levels of government, and several other policy projects at the provincial level.

Robbin comes to COU from Human Resources Development Canada, where she was Director of the Office of Disability Services, overseeing a variety of policy and program initiatives. Before that, she served as Vice-President, Public Policy and Government Relations at Imagine Canada; as Executive Director, Public Policy at EKOS Research; and as Policy Advisor in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Robbin holds a BA in history and French literature from the University of Toronto and an MA in history from Queen's University.